

Family Recovery Courts

The drug court movement began in Miami-Dade County in 1989 as an alternative to the traditional case processing of repeat drug offenders. Drawing on research and utilizing the drug court model, family recovery courts (FRCs) apply a non-adversarial, collaborative approach and utilize a multidisciplinary team including a judge, Department of Child Services attorney, defense attorneys, case-mangers, and treatment providers. FRCs target cases of abuse or neglect wherein the parent or primary caregiver suffers from a substance use disorder and/or co-occurring disorders. FRC teams aspire to provide better outcomes for children involved with the child welfare system by providing problem-solving court services to the child's parent or primary caregiver. FRCs may be used in cases where a removal of a child has occurred but may also be appropriate for in-home CHINS cases.

While traditional drug courts direct resources to the adult who is involved with the criminal justice system, FRCs focus on the parent and include the family in treatment and other ancillary services. Like traditional drug courts, FRCs utilize incentives and graduated sanctions to reinforce positive behavior and hold parents/caregivers/primary caregivers accountable during their participation in the program.

Problem-Solving Courts in Indiana are governed by Ind. Code 33-23-16 and the Judicial Conference of Indiana Problem-Solving Court Rules. The Indiana Office of Court Services certifies problem-solving courts established in accordance with these statutes and rules. For additional information about Indiana problem-solving courts and a directory of certified courts, visit <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/pscourts/2337.htm>.

The Indiana Supreme Court and the Department of Child Services are committed to expanding the availability of FRCs to families across the state. On August 1, 2018 the Indiana Office of Court Services and the Department of Child Services (DCS), in partnership with the Center for Children and Family Futures and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, sponsored a Family Recovery Court Best Practices Training. Fifteen counties were represented by teams comprised of judges, magistrates, referees, DCS Attorneys, defense counsel representatives, DCS local office directors, treatment providers, probation officers and DCS family case managers. Teams present included seven certified FRCs, two FRCs in the planning stages, and six prospective FRCs. Certified FRCs received training on ensuring a family centered approach and supporting families; while the planning and prospective FRCs trained on implementation and action planning. For additional information on family recovery courts, visit <https://www.cffutures.org/>

For more information about starting a family recovery court, please contact:

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